

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
STATE CONVENTION  
OF THE  
COLORED FREEMEN OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
**HELD IN PITTSBURGH,**  
ON THE 23D, 24TH AND 25TH OF AUGUST, 1841,  
FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
CONSIDERING THEIR CONDITION,  
AND  
THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT

PITTSBURGH:  
PRINTED BY MATTHEW M. GRANT.

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1841.

## CIRCULAR.

### TO THE COLORED FREEMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

AGREEABLY to previous notice, a large and respectable meeting of the Colored People of Pittsburgh was held, in the public School-Room, on Tuesday evening, Jan. 12th, 1841. The meeting was organized by appointing John Peck, President; George Gardner and J. B. Vashon, Vice Presidents; T. A. Brown and John N. Templeton, Secretaries.

The object of the meeting was stated by the President to be, the consideration of the present disfranchisement of the Colored People of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and of measures for obtaining the exercise of that sacred right.

On motion, a resolution was adopted, approving of the holding of a STATE CONVENTION.

The hour growing late, and the meeting having greatly increased in interest as well as in numbers, it was, on motion, resolved, that the meeting adjourn to meet again on next Tuesday evening, and that a Committee of seven be appointed to draft a proper Preamble and Resolutions for the consideration of the next meeting.

On this Committee the meeting appointed Lewis Woodson, Martin R. Delaney, P. Jackson, Thomas Norris, J. B. Vashon, George Galbreath, and Daniel Carney.

TUESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 19, 1841.

Public meeting of the Colored People of Pittsburgh, in Bethel Church, in Front Street, according to adjournment. The officers of the previous meeting were present, and in their seats. The meeting was opened for the despatch of business with prayer.

The proceedings of the previous meeting were read, and remarks explanatory of its object were made by the President, and one of the Vice Presidents.

The Chairman of the Committee to draft a Preamble and Resolutions for the consideration of the meeting was then called on for his report, which was read by him, as follows:

The Committee appointed by a public meeting of the Colored Citizens of Pittsburgh, on the 12th day of January, 1841, to draft a Preamble and Resolutions expressive of their views on the subject of holding a State Convention, to consider measures for obtaining the exercise of the right of the elective franchise, beg leave to submit the following

**REPORT.**—WHEREAS, among all the rights of a Republic none are so sacred, and among all the safeguards of the liberties of freemen none are so powerful, as the right of suffrage—a right, indeed, which gives political existence to those who possess it, and is political annihilation to those who are deprived of it—a right paramount in vitality and importance to all political rights; and to obtain which when deprived of it, no labor should be counted too severe, no sacrifice too great—and, WHEREAS, the Colored Citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are, by her present Constitution, deprived of the exercise of this sacred right, for no other cause than that it has pleased the Almighty Creator to clothe them with a dark hue, a circumstance over which they had no control, and for which no just tribunal can or will hold them accountable, and to punish them for which, with the highest political privation, is not only doing violence to nature herself, but is offering insult and mockery to the Almighty Creator of all things and Judge of all men—and, WHEREAS, the history of the past, the observation of the present, and the word and providence of God, shew, that those who exert themselves most are the most successful in the attainment of the object of their lawful pursuit; and that those who will exert themselves none, even lose that which they have; and that no honest condition is so hopeless, but that it may be improved and elevated, by the use of just and honorable means—and, WHEREAS, in opposition to this just and wholesome maxim, the Colored People of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have hitherto maintained an apathy and indifference, not only to the exercise of the elective franchise, but to other collateral rights of high importance to them as freemen; an apathy and indifference highly criminal, and for which it is feared they are not prepared to give a satisfactory account, neither to God, their own consciences, nor posterity; and to maintain which apathy and indifference longer, would degrade them still lower in the eyes of all enlightened and good men: Therefore,

1. **RESOLVED**, by the Colored Citizens of Pittsburgh, in public meeting assembled, That we recommend to our Colored Fellow Citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the propriety of holding a State Convention at Harrisburgh, on the Third Monday in August next, to consider and adopt such measures as may best tend to invest us with the exercise of the right of the elective franchise in this Commonwealth.

2. **RESOLVED**, That when laboring for the attainment of an object of such vital importance to us, as the exercise of the elective franchise in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all party feeling, all sectional jealousies, all personal prejudices, should be laid aside; and that we pledge ourselves to stand ready to make all necessary personal sacrifices for the general good, and to continue in the use of all lawful and honorable means until it is achieved.

3. **RESOLVED**, That a Corresponding Committee of thirteen be appointed, whose duty it shall be to correspond and confer with their fellow citizens of this Commonwealth on the subject of holding a State Convention.

After the reading of the Preamble and Resolutions, each paragraph and resolution was taken up and considered separately; after which the whole were unanimously adopted.

The meeting then appointed, for the Corresponding Committee, Lewis Woodson, John N. Templeton, J. Peck, A. D. Lewis, Charles Richards, J. B. Vashon, George Galbreath, T. Norris, T. A. Brown, Samuel Johnson, M. R. Delancy, P. Jackson, and George Gardner. And then the meeting adjourned.

JOHN PECK, PRESIDENT.

G. GARDNER, } VICE PRESIDENTS.  
J. B. VASHON, }

THOMAS A. BROWN, } SECRETARIES.  
JOHN N. TEMPLETON, }

In addition to the foregoing, the Corresponding Committee appointed under the third resolution beg leave to offer a few of the considerations which induced their constituents to recommend the holding of a STATE CONVENTION.

1. It is hardly to be expected that the Constitution will be altered, and the right of voting granted to colored persons, unless at least a majority of them in the whole state desire it.

2. If a majority in the whole state desire this right, they must, in some way or other, show it.

3. The general way of showing the popular will, in the United States, in favor of any individual, or of any great measure, is by holding a Convention.

4. If the white citizens cannot succeed, without submitting to the expense and trouble of holding Conventions, we cannot see upon what ground the colored citizens expect to succeed, by easier and cheaper means.

5. Conventions possess a double advantage—(1.) Of showing the popular will—(2.) Of arousing the sympathies. They inspire confidence, and impart life and energy to the actions of men, in a manner superior to all other means. And this is the chief reason why they are so often resorted to for carrying great and important measures. So essential are popular assemblies to the liberties of man, that he cannot obtain them, or preserve them when obtained, without their aid. The whole history of the past is but one continued confirmation of the fact, that where there are no popular assemblies, there is no Republican Government.

6. We owe it to ourselves, to our friends, to our posterity, to make at least some effort to silence the charge which has long been preferred against us, of indifference to our rights; and we can conceive of no way of doing it, which promises more success, than the one now presented.

7. A further consideration why we should hold a Convention, and, if possible, interest a majority of the citizens in our favor, is, that after the desired alteration in the Constitution has been made and concurred in by two successive Legislatures, it must then be submitted to a vote of the whole state for their adoption.

As to the time and place of holding the Convention, we have named the third Monday of August, because immediately after harvest, which will best enable the farmers to attend; and Harrisburgh, because it is the capital, and near the centre of the state.

You are respectfully requested to call a public meeting of your fellow citizens, and lay the contents of this Circular before them, with as little delay as possible; but where this may not be necessary, from the smallness of their number, lay it before them individually; and return us the result of your deliberations at your earliest convenience.

By order of the Committee,

PITTSBURGH, MARCH 15, 1841.

LEWIS WOODSON, CHAIRMAN.

# A CALL

FOR

## A STATE CONVENTION OF THE COLORED FREEMEN OF PENNSYLVANIA,

To be held in the City of Pittsburgh, on the 4th Monday of August, 1841.

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Freemen! The present Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania deprives you of the right of suffrage—a right, paramount in importance to all other political rights, being their foundation and only safeguard, and without which all other rights are rendered unsafe and insecure. Argument to induce you to make one united and powerful effort to obtain this right is useless. Nay, if argument were necessary to induce such effort, it would show that you were undeserving of its enjoyment. Your love of liberty, of your country, of yourselves, and of your posterity, will constitute inducements to effort more powerful than the most eloquent argument which we could adduce. You are therefore at once invited to assemble in State Convention, and devise and adopt the best means for its attainment.

The Convention should be a large one. Every county in the state should be represented. Every friend of equal laws and equal rights should be present, either in person or by representation. Every community that can should elect and send on a representation; and those who can elect no representatives should come themselves.

In our Circular first proposing the Convention, Harrisburgh was named as the place of meeting; but her citizens, although in favor of the Convention, thought it not best for it to meet there. From the commencement, a strong desire manifested itself, not to meet in the extreme eastern part of the state; and no other central place offering in good time, and the citizens of Pittsburgh calling for it with a unanimity and enthusiasm seldom-equalled, it was thought expedient to yield to their request. Her want of centrality is fully compensated by her facilities of access; and the fatigues of the journey will be soon forgotten in the general kindness and hospitality of her citizens. Highways and Canals of the best quality, and on which is every species of conveyance, and at the lowest charges, start out from here, and reach every extreme of the state; offering an open door and easy journey to all who desire to come. Freemen, respond to the invitation of your fellow citizens. Let your Convention in Pittsburgh, on the Fourth Monday in August, 1841, be worthy of those who invite you, worthy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pittsburgh, July 17, 1841.

[The above call was signed by one hundred and eight persons, of the Counties of Allegheny, Cumberland, Washington, Chester, Greene, Mifflin, Centre, Adams, Dauphin, Beaver, Franklin, Huntingdon, Fayette, York, Cambria, Indiana, Bedford, Armstrong, Lycoming, and Westmoreland.]

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## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION.

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AGREEABLY to the foregoing "Call," the STATE CONVENTION of the COLORED FREEMEN of PENNSYLVANIA assembled, in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Front street, Pittsburgh, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of Monday, August 23d, 1841.

At eleven o'clock, a large number of Delegates having appeared, LEWIS WOODSON, chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, took the chair, and called the Convention to order, and JOHN N. TEMPLETON was appointed Secretary, *pro tempore*.

The Convention was opened with prayer by the Chairman; after which he arose, and briefly addressed the Convention, as follows:

**GENTLEMEN:**—We are assembled, for the first time, in Pennsylvania, in State Convention; and it is matter of high gratification to witness the presence of so many Delegates on the first day of our meeting. It is strong evidence of the deep interest which we feel in the great object which has brought us together. The object of our Convention is, to consider the condition of our people in this Commonwealth, and to devise means for its improvement. The various grievances which we suffer will be brought to your notice in the progress of the business of the Convention; and it is not, therefore, necessary that I should now stop to mention them. Our Convention will be organized, and our business transacted, in the usual manner; and I hope that all may be done in a manner creditable to ourselves, our immediate constituents, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Delegates then presented their credentials; and those who had come without any, gave in their names to the Secretary.

On motion of Thomas A. Brown, seconded by A. D. Lewis,

*Resolved*, That a Committee of nine be appointed by the chair, to nominate officers for this Convention.

On this Committee the chair appointed Thomas A. Brown, John N. Templeton, J. Curtis, Thomas Norris, Halson Vashon, Joseph H. Mahorney, P. L. Jackson, Samuel Williams, Thomas S. Robinson.

On motion of Thomas Norris, seconded by John B. Vashon,

*Resolved*, That a Committee of five be appointed to draft rules for the government of this Convention.

On this Committee the Convention appointed Thomas Norris, A. D. Lewis, John B. Vashon, Edward R. Parker, John Peck.

On motion of John B. Vashon, seconded by Thomas A. Brown,

*Resolved*, That the officers of this Convention shall be one President, three Vice Presidents, and three Secretaries.

And then the Convention adjourned until half past two in the afternoon.

*Monday Afternoon, half past two o'clock.*

The Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with prayer by Rev. Leonard Collins.

The committee to nominate officers for the Convention made the following report, which was accepted; and the persons named therein declared duly elected officers of this Convention.

JOHN PECK, of Allegheny, *President.*

WILLIAM PORTER, of Cambria,

THOMAS S. ROBINSON, of Washington,

NATHANIEL M'CURDY, of Greene,

LEWIS WOODSON, of Pittsburgh,

JOHN N. TEMPLETON, of Pittsburgh,

WM. L. BARNS, of Allegheny,

*Vice Presidents.*

*Secretaries.*

On taking his seat, the President addressed the Convention in a brief and appropriate manner; thanking them for the honor conferred by electing him to preside over their deliberations; noticing the object which had brought them together; and asking their co-operation and support in the performance of the duties of his office.

On motion of Lewis Woodson, seconded by T. A. Brown,

*Resolved*, That a committee of seven be appointed, whose duty it shall be to prepare business for this Convention.

On this committee the Convention appointed John B. Vashon, Lewis Woodson, Martin R. Delaney, Thomas A. Brown, A. D. Lewis, Halson Vashon, Leonard Collins.

On motion of M. R. Delaney, seconded by Samuel Bruce,

*Resolved*, That the Committee of Arrangements, appointed by the Corresponding Committee of Allegheny county, to receive and attend to the accommodation of Delegates to this Convention, be continued; and that they attend to the accommodation of ladies and gentlemen visiting this Convention, and to the preservation of order.

The committee on rules for the government of the Convention made their report, which, after undergoing sundry amendments, was adopted, as follows:

1. The President shall take the chair at the hour to which the Convention adjourned, and call the Convention to order.

2. The minutes of the preceding session shall be read, when errors, if any, shall be corrected.

3. The President shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Convention.

4. All motions and addresses shall be made to the President, the member rising from his seat.

5. All motions, except those of reference, shall be submitted in writing.

6. All committees shall be nominated by the President, unless otherwise ordered by the Convention.

7. The previous question shall always be in order, and, until decided, shall preclude all amendments and debate of the main question; and shall be put in this form, "shall the main question be now put?"

8. No member shall be interrupted while speaking, except when out of order, when he shall be called to order by the President.

9. A motion to adjourn shall always be in order, and shall be decided without debate.

10. No member shall speak more than twice on the same question; nor longer than thirty minutes at any one time.

11. A motion to reconsider can only be made by one who voted in the majority, and at a session succeeding the one in which the question was decided.

12. No resolution, except to amend, to refer, to postpone, to lay on the table, or to adjourn, shall be offered to the Convention, except it come through the business committee.

13. The sessions of the Convention shall commence at ten o'clock in the forenoon, and at half past two in the afternoon.

14. Each session shall open and close with prayer.

And then the Convention adjourned until ten o'clock to-morrow morning.

Prayer by Rev. A. D. Lewis.

*Tuesday Morning, August 24th, 1841.*

The Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with prayer by Rev. Samuel Williams, of Cambria.

The minutes of the preceding session were read and corrected. The rules of the Convention were also read, for the information of such Delegates as had arrived since the afternoon session of yesterday.

All new Delegates were requested to hand in their credentials or their names to the third Secretary, whose business it was to attend to the roll.

The business committee then reported the following preamble and resolutions:

**WHEREAS**, a call for a State Convention of the Colored Freeman of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to be held in the City of Pittsburgh, on Monday, the 23d, day of August, 1841, signed by numerous freemen of said Commonwealth, was issued by the Corresponding Committee of Allegheny county, on the 17th of July, 1841, to consider measures for the elevation of said freemen in said Commonwealth: *And, whereas*, said call has been responded to by the assembling of a large number of Delegates, elected in pursuance thereof, and at the

time and place expressed therein: *And, whereas*, the Convention thus assembled owe it to themselves, their immediate constituents, and the public generally, to make an expression of their wishes and sentiments: Therefore.

1. *Resolved*, By the COLORED FREEMEN of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in STATE CONVENTION assembled, That we love the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and feel an inseparable attachment to her institutions and just laws; and deem it alike our duty and our privilege, at all times, to sustain and uphold them.

2. *Resolved*, That as we ever have performed, and ever intend to perform, all duties imposed upon us, as good citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we deem it but just that we should, in common with others, enjoy all the privileges and immunities of citizens; and therefore view with deepest regret that restriction in the third article of her Constitution, which deprives us, as colored men, of the right of suffrage.

3. *Resolved*, That all restrictions in our State Constitution founded upon complexion are impolitic, oppressive, and wrong; and that we will use, and continue to use, all lawful and honorable means to have them abolished.

4. *Resolved*, That we will petition our State Legislature, so to amend the Constitution of this Commonwealth, as to remove all restrictions on account of color; and that we will continue to petition until our prayer is granted.

The preamble and resolutions were each taken up and considered separately, and were discussed at length, by gentlemen, Peck, Vashon, A. D. Lewis, Woodson, and Brown. When the discussion was arrested, by a motion to adjourn until half past two o'clock in the afternoon.

*Tuesday Afternoon, half past two o'clock.*

The Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment. The President called the Convention to order, and opened with prayer by Rev. Samuel Johnson.

The minutes of the forenoon session were read and approved.

The discussion on the resolutions of the business committee was resumed, and further remarks were made by gentlemen, Delany, and Collins, of Franklin. After which the whole were unanimously adopted.

The business committee further reported the following resolutions:

5. *Resolved*, That we recommend to our people EDUCATION as a powerful means of their elevation; and that we especially advise them to educate their children, and have them instructed in some useful trade, without which they never can attain to any respectable rank in society.

6. *Resolved*, That as newspapers contain, beside the ordinary news of the day, much useful knowledge, which tends to enlighten the understanding and improve the character, we therefore recommend that every family, who can possibly afford it, take one or more well conducted newspapers.

7. *Resolved*, That as Intemperance is a great source of degradation, misery, and crime, rendering its victims a curse to themselves, their families, and society; we therefore recommend our people, as they love themselves and their posterity, and the esteem of all wise and virtuous men; and as they love their rights and hope to obtain them, to abstain TOTALLY from the use of all intoxicating liquors; and that wherever there is a sufficient number in one place, they form societies on the plan of TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

8. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Convention, no calling is more honorable, independent, and virtuous, than farming; and that, as there now is, and must continue to be, much competition among common laborers in all our large towns and cities; and that according to common usage, it may be expected that the most favored class will generally be preferred; we therefore recommend all our people, who are not successful mechanics, to become cultivators of the soil.

9. *Resolved*, That this Convention advise the people of color throughout this state, to discontinue public processions on any day, as being highly prejudicial to their interest as a people.

The resolutions were taken up and considered separately. Remarks upon them were made by gentlemen, Lewis, Norris, Jackson, Hilton, Chidester, Delaney, Collins of Franklin, Vashon, and Woodson; and the whole were unanimously adopted.

On motion of L. Woodson, seconded by S. Williams,

*Resolved*, That a committee of five be appointed to draft an address to the people of color in this state, to accompany the proceedings of this Convention.

On this committee the President appointed Lewis Woodson, N. M'Curdy, Richard Chidester, J. B. Vashon, Samuel Williams.

And then the Convention adjourned, to meet again on to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. Prayer by Rev. A. D. Lewis.

*Wednesday Morning, August 25, 1841.*

The Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment. The President being absent, the second Vice President took the chair, and called the Convention to order. Prayer by the first Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meetings were read and approved.

The business committee further reported the following resolutions:

10. *Resolved*, That until we can establish a newspaper of our own in this state, the *COLORED AMERICAN* be considered our general public organ.

11. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Convention, a newspaper conducted by the colored people, and adapted to their wants, is much needed in this state; and that we request their general co-operation, especially in the east, in establishing such a paper.

12. *Resolved*, That there be a State Corresponding Committee of twenty appointed, whose duty it shall be, to carry out the measures of this Convention in regard to the elevation of our people in this Commonwealth.

On this committee the President nominated the following persons, and the Convention confirmed the nomination, viz:

Lewis Woodson, John B. Vashon, Abraham D. Lewis, Richard Bryans, John N. Templeton, Lewis McAlfre, Charles Richards, Samuel Bruce, Jr., Thomas A. Brown, Samuel Williams, Henry Anderson, Nathaniel M'Curdy, A. D. Shadd, C. T. Clayton, Stephen Smith, James Needham, Robert Gordon, William Webb, Charles Dorris, Leonard Collins.

The Convention then appointed Thomas Norris and Thomas A. Brown, a committee to receive statistical reports; and went into committee of the whole, R. Bryans of Fayette in the chair, to hear and receive such reports from Delegates.

After spending some time in hearing and receiving reports, the committee arose, and the President resumed the chair.

On motion, *Resolved*, That a committee of five, on Publication, be appointed. On this committee the President appointed, Lewis Woodson, John N. Templeton, J. B. Vashon, Thomas Norris, A. D. Lewis.

On motion, The statistics in the hands of the committee appointed to receive them, were referred to the committee on publication.

And then the Convention adjourned, to meet again at half past two in the afternoon. Prayer by Rev. S. Johnson.

*Wednesday Afternoon, half past two o'clock.*

The Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment. The President called the Convention to order, and opened with prayer by the Rev. Leonard Collins.

The minutes of the previous session were read and approved.



The business committee further reported the following resolutions, which were considered separately, and adopted:

13. *Resolved*, That this Convention authorize the State Corresponding Committee to employ a suitable Agent, to travel through the State, deliver lectures to our people, and perform such other duties as may be assigned him, in carrying out the measures of this Convention.

14. *Resolved*, That it shall be the duty of each Delegation, on their return home, to make out a statistical report of their District, including the Churches, Schools, Benevolent Societies, amount of Property, Taxes, Paupers, &c., and forward the same to the Publishing Committee immediately.

15. *Resolved*, That this Convention recommend to our people generally, and to the Delegates here assembled in particular, to call COUNTY CONVENTIONS, and form associations for raising moneys, to defray the expenses of such Agent as may be appointed to visit them, and to assist in carrying out the measures of this Convention.

16. *Resolved*, That we recommend the holding of another State Convention, east of the mountains, some time during the summer of 1842.

The Convention then went into committee of the whole, to raise funds for defraying the expenses of printing, &c. After spending a short time, \$30 52 were collected. The committee arose, and the President resumed the chair.

On motion, The moneys collected in committee of the whole were handed over to J. B. Vashon, Treasurer of the Conventional Fund for Allegheny county, to be held in trust by him for the publishing and corresponding committees of this Convention.

Remarks, motions, and suggestions, of various kinds, were made by gentlemen, Delaney, Chidester, M'Alfrey, Bryans, Peck, Lewis, Vashon, Norris, Williams, G. R. Parker, Jackson, and others; all of which were disposed of by the Convention.

The business committee further reported the following resolutions:

17. *Resolved*, That we respectfully tender our thanks to His Honor, the Mayor of this city, and his efficient and gentlemanly Police, for the protection which they have afforded this Convention during its sitting.

18. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to the good citizens of Pittsburgh, for the kind and hospitable manner in which they have entertained us during our sitting.

19. *Resolved*, That the special thanks of this Convention be tendered to the gentlemanly and accomplished Police Officer, who has waited upon us during our sitting, to preserve order among spectators and others, for the faithful manner in which he has performed his duty; and that with our thanks he also be presented with the sum of \$5.

20. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to the ladies, for their presence during its sitting.

21. *Resolved*, That our thanks be returned to the Trustees, for the use of this Church for the sitting of this Convention.

The third Secretary, whose business it was to attend to the credentials and names of Delegates was called upon, and reported that he had collected and enrolled the names of all the Delegates. The roll was called over, corrected, and approved.

A letter from a great meeting of the City and County of Philadelphia, approving of the Convention, and containing the names of fifteen Delegates elected to represent them therein; together with a request that they should be remembered in the proceedings of the Convention, was received by the publishing committee; and they have agreed that the names of the Philadelphia Delegates shall be added to the roll, although they did not in person attend the Convention.

The whole minutes of the Convention, from the commencement to the close, were read over, corrected, and approved.

On motion, The Publishing Committee were authorized to make such corrections and amendments in the minutes, as may be necessary, to fit them for publication; provided they preserve their spirit and intention.

The business committee then reported their final resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

22. *Resolved*, That the proceedings of this Convention, together with the address, be signed by its officers, printed in pamphlet form, and published.

The venerable and Rev. Samuel Collins then arose, and briefly addressed the Convention; expressing his high gratification at having witnessed the excellent spirit which pervaded it from the commencement to the close; its good order, and the correct and statesman like manner in which it had transacted its business; and concluded by solemnly invoking the blessing of Almighty God upon each member, and upon the doings of the Convention.

The President then addressed the Convention, noticing in a brief and appropriate manner its various doings, and their happy results if properly carried out; the responsibility of each member, and of every individual in the Commonwealth, in regard to carrying them out: the pleasing fact that so large a Delegation had been together for three days, had transacted much deeply interesting business, without a single unpleasant occurrence; and that we were now about to separate with the blessing of a good man, whose head was whited with the frosts of eighty winters, upon each member, and upon the doings of the Convention.

The whole assembly then united in singing that beautiful and impressive hymn, beginning with "Before Jehovah's awful throne," to Old Hundred, with indescribable fervor and pathos; the voices of the ladies, who crowded the gallery, uniting with those of the men from below, producing an effect, which to be appreciated must have been heard. The Rev. Lewis Woodson then led in a solemn and appropriate prayer.

And then, on motion, the Convention adjourned, *sine die*.

JOHN PECK, President.

WILLIAM PORTER,  
THOMAS S. ROBINSON, } Vice Presidents.  
NATHANIEL M'CURDY,

Lewis Woodson,  
John N. Templeton, } Secretaries.  
William L. Barns,

In pursuance of the duty assigned them by a resolution of the Convention, the undersigned Committee respectfully present to the Colored Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the following

## A D D R E S S .

You have doubtless read the foregoing Proceedings of our Convention, with that attention and interest which their importance demands. Were they the proceedings of any similar meeting, they would be read with attention and interest, on account of their intrinsic merit; but how much more, when it is remembered that they are the exclusive production of the first State Convention ever held in Pennsylvania, by us, as an oppressed people, to consider our condition, and the means of its improvement.

Excellent as the proceedings are, it will be matter of high gratification to you to know, that the spirit in which they were conducted was equal in excellence

with themselves. The good order of the Convention, and the correct and prudent manner in which it transacted its business, was matter of admiration to all who visited it. Indeed, it was considered next to a miracle, that such a large number of men could be together for three days, and transact so much important business, without a single unpleasant occurrence.

But, creditable as our Convention has been to all who were in any way concerned in it, and happy as its influence has been, alike upon its members and its numerous visitors and spectators, it is by no means to be considered as the end of the great work of our elevation in this Commonwealth. On the contrary, it should be considered, as it really is, only a happy beginning. He who supposeth that meeting together and passing resolutions, however wise and excellent in themselves, will attain our end, is mistaken. And if he builds his hope of success upon such a foundation, let him know assuredly that he builds upon the sand.

The resolutions must be carried out; their spirit must be lived up to, and their instructions practised; otherwise we may look in vain for their happy result. They were drawn up with great care, and strict reference to all the circumstances and relations of our present condition. Their principles are founded in truth, and will prove, to all who embrace them, a foundation which cannot be shaken. The experience and close observation of many years teach us that they are wisely adapted to our best interests, and, if carried out in the spirit and design of the Convention, will unquestionably raise us in society far above our present level.

Our purpose, in this address, is to notice the various resolutions of the Convention; the considerations which induced them; the means by which their objects are to be accomplished; and their result, if properly carried out. We shall arrange our address under as many heads as it naturally contains, and consider the several resolutions under their appropriate heads. By pursuing this course, we believe that each part may be better remembered, and better understood.—We begin with

### THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

A restriction in the third article of the Constitution of Pennsylvania deprives us, as colored men, of the right of suffrage; and a resolution of the Convention declares this restriction to be impolitic, oppressive, and wrong. It is impolitic for the state thus to restrict any portion of her inhabitants, because it degrades them, and in so far detracts from the honor and respectability of the state. It deprives them of one of the most powerful stimulants to a virtuous and upright life; paralyzes their efforts to attain wealth and respectability; and thus lessens the general wealth of the state, and the amount of taxes which would otherwise be paid into the state treasury. It is oppressive, because we are required to pay the same homage and obedience to the laws as other citizens, and the same taxes, and are yet denied the same equivalent. It also deprives us of political defence. Our worst adversary may be a candidate for an office, the salary of which is in part made up of taxes paid out of our own pockets, and yet we have not the power of casting a single vote to prevent his triumph. It tears away the bulwark, the very citadel of our liberties, and leaves us exposed on every side. It is wrong, because it inflicts punishment upon the innocent. The elective franchise is the highest privilege known to republicans; it is the foundation and only safeguard of all political rights; and to deprive one of it, is to inflict the highest political punishment.

But what is our crime, that such excessive punishment should be inflicted upon us? What abuse have we ever made of this privilege? What is there in our past history to show, that in so far as our number or influence is concerned, the interests of the state, and of the nation, may not be safely trusted in our hands? Under all circumstances, and upon all occasions, we have been faithful

to our country and obedient to her laws; and in so far as we have been permitted, have contributed our share to its happiness and prosperity; and we deem it but simple justice that we should, in common with others, share its privileges.

Before dismissing this part of our address, permit us to say a few words in regard to the payment of

### TAXES.

Some have supposed, that because we are not allowed to vote, we ought not to pay taxes; but this is in part a mistake. Taxation was in use, long before voting, as it is practised in this country, was known; and the equivalent which men in those days received for their taxes was protection. The subject paid into the treasury of the king so much taxes; and the king granted the subject, as an equivalent, so much protection. Such is the case in many powerful kingdoms even at the present day; such as Russia, Austria, Turkey, &c. The power that receives taxes is always bound to protect; and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by receiving into her treasury our taxes, guarantees to us the protection of her laws. We pay our taxes, then, not the less for our vote, but the more for the protection of the laws.

The important subject of

### EDUCATION

next claims our attention; and we cannot too much commend to your attention and practice, the resolution of the Convention on this subject. Considered in itself, education is a matter of the first importance, on account of the moral pleasure and elevation which it imparts to its possessor; but when, in addition to this, it is remembered that it qualifies for every thing useful, good, and great, its importance is infinite. But the education which we recommend is that which qualifies for usefulness in its best and most extensive sense; and is not finished, until its subject has learned some trade, by which he may decently maintain himself in society. Labor is the natural source of wealth, and is not only right in the sight of God, but honorable in the eyes of all good men; and those who give their children a good education and a trade, give them the best of all fortunes; one infinitely better than silver and gold, because it can neither be squandered nor lost. We therefore most earnestly entreat you, as you love your children, and desire their future usefulness and respectability in society, the happiness of your own declining days, and the general good of your country, to make every possible exertion and every necessary sacrifice, to give them a good education and a trade. We would pursue this important subject more in detail, but deem it unnecessary, because the moment you become rightly interested in it, you will find numerous friends around you, ready to give all necessary advice and assistance.

### NEWSPAPERS AND THE PRESS

next claim our attention. The utility of newspapers is two-fold: 1, to impart intelligence, and, 2, to unite. They are the present history of the world; and he who does not read them is almost as though he were shut up in prison. They tend to inspire public spirit and enterprise, especially in the young, and on that account no family should be without them: it were better that our children should eat plainer diet, and dress in coarser apparel, than be deprived of the use of a well conducted newspaper. But, in addition to their intelligence, newspapers tend to impart the same sentiments and the same views to all who read them. They bring as it were into the society of each other, the most distant places and kingdoms of the earth. We imagine the day not far distant, when, by the influence of the press, shall be united in one, the whole family of man.

But circumstances make it absolutely necessary, that we should have a press of our own. It is just as absurd to imagine, that we can become intelligent and

enterprising, by others speaking and writing for us, as that we can become fat by their eating and drinking for us. It is true that kind friends may persuade the master to unrivet the fetters of the slave, and the Legislature to repeal all unjust and unwholesome laws; but here their kind offices measurably end; the balance of the work is chiefly ours.

To purchase a press and its accompanying apparatus, would cost from five to seven hundred dollars; and to print an ordinary sheet, such as our case would require, would cost perhaps a little upwards of thirty-five dollars a week; amounting in a year say to two thousand dollars. And what are our resources for sustaining this expense? Our population is near fifty thousand; and although the statistical returns to our Convention were very imperfect, yet they were sufficient to show that we own at least two million dollars' worth of property. And will any one presume that one thousand subscribers, able to pay two dollars a year each for a good paper, cannot be found in all those numbers, and all this wealth?

We next call your attention to the subject of

### TEMPERANCE.

And although highly important, we shall not dwell upon it at any length; because it has been so generally agitated throughout the state, you must understand all its consequences as well as ourselves. Temperate as we fondly hope we generally are, yet it is feared more is squandered for ardent spirits, than would furnish us with a newspaper, educate our children, and support our churches. We exhort you, by every consideration, to do all in your power to banish from society this scourge and curse of our race, by promoting every where the popular and unfailing principle of **TOTAL ABSTINENCE**.

The resolution of the Convention on

### FARMING

contains the reasons which induced its adoption; and we can not too earnestly recommend it to your careful attention. We have been too long, and too justly, we are sorry to admit, charged with crowding into the large towns and cities, where it is impossible for us to find honorable or profitable employment. So long as we pursue this most pernicious practice, we must expect to remain degraded and despised. Its evils are innumerable, only a few of which can be noticed here.

1. The want of constant and profitable employment must forever keep us poor.

2. Poverty exposes us to insult and abuse from others, without the proper means of defending ourselves; and it also creates strong temptation to the commission of crime.

3. It prevents parents from bringing up their children in an orderly and proper manner, rendering them unfit for any thing honorable or useful in future life.

4. It compels them to put their children out at service, to perform the most degrading drudgery, for a bare subsistence, which often proves alike fatal to their health and their morals. This is most lamentably true as it regards our females. The very heart sickens even to think of the insults and miseries which they suffer in large towns and cities; it is enough to extinguish every delicate and virtuous feeling peculiar to the sex.

5. The invadable poverty of our people, in the cities, crowds them into dwellings, and places, distinguished for any thing but comfort and health; and every one knows that the consequence of inhabiting such dwellings is disease and death. Within the last ten years, causes which we shall not stop here to notice, have either prevented or destroyed the lives of more than two hundred

thousand of our people in the United States; and will we lay to, with our own self-murdering hands, and help on this work of death?

6. By settling in the country, and becoming independent farmers, we would escape almost entirely that prejudice which operates so injuriously against us in the cities. It is a mistake to suppose that there is any prejudice against mere *color*. Gentlemen and ladies, distinguished alike for their learning, their virtues, and their taste, have articles of dress, furniture, and equipage, of black, and every variety of color. Indeed, a full suit of black is universally considered the most rich and magnificent that can possibly be worn. Hence prejudice is not against *color*, but against *condition*; therefore improve the condition, and you destroy the prejudice.

We can pursue this part of our address no further; but again most earnestly entreat all our people, who are not successful mechanics, to settle in the country, and become cultivators of the soil.

The last resolution of the Convention to which we shall invite your particular attention, is that in regard to holding

### COUNTY CONVENTIONS.

We recommend this measure to you in the confidence of experience. It has been tried in several counties, with the most eminent success. In many places the people knew nothing of their resources or ability to help themselves, until they called one of these general meetings. There are no means like it, for stirring up the feelings, creating public spirit, and bringing about important results. Held your County Conventions, and out of them will grow your Temperance, Education, Literary, and Benevolent Societies. And in them you can devise means for raising the funds mentioned in the resolution of the Convention. To carry out the measures of the Convention will require much labor and some funds; more perhaps than any one district can well bear; and it would be unjust to expect that one district should bear all the burthen, when the whole are to share in the benefit. Each district, and each individual, will therefore come forward cheerfully, and contribute their share.

We have thus briefly called your attention to the principal general resolutions of the Convention, the considerations which induced them, the means of accomplishing their objects; and it only remains for us to speak briefly of their result, if carried out in the spirit and intention of the Convention.

We wish to impress most distinctly upon your minds, what we mentioned in the outset, that the Convention never intended the passage of the resolutions to be the end of our labor, but rather only the beginning. It was well aware that we have been too long, and too justly, charged with beginning every thing, and accomplishing nothing; but it was believed that the time has come, when we are prepared to put this charge to silence; when we will not only begin, but accomplish our designs. It passed them under the full expectation that every individual in the Commonwealth would heartily respond to them, and cheerfully assist in carrying them out. And if thus responded to, and thus carried out, just as sure as the rays of the sun warm the frozen earth, and cause it to produce its fruit in its season, or as the rivers run from the mountains to the ocean, we will be raised to the rank of a wealthy, intelligent, and virtuous people.

In conclusion, it is true, that in this Commonwealth we suffer some grievances; but at the same time we enjoy many privileges; and let us not abuse one of them, but use all to the best advantage. Thus we will show, that although we do not enjoy all our rights, we at least deserve them.

The present is a most important crisis in our history. The whole country is more or less agitated on our account, and all eyes are upon us. Every one

must therefore feel the necessity of the utmost circumspection in all our conduct, whether private or public. We owe this to God, if we hope for His blessings; to ourselves, if we wish to obtain our rights, and to our posterity, if we wish them to rise up and call us blessed.

LEWIS WOODSON, of Allegheny,	} Committee.
RICHARD CHIDESTER, of Fayette,	
SAMUEL WILLIAMS, of Cambria,	
NATHANIEL M'CURDY, of Greene,	
JOHN B. VASHON, of Allegheny,	

## R O L L .

Thomas Norris,  
 Rev. Samuel Collins,  
 Rev. A. D. Lewis,  
 Charles Richards,  
 Rev. Lewis Woodson,  
 John B. Vashon,  
 Solomon Norris,  
 John Peck, of P.,  
 Samuel Bruce, Sr.,  
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 John N. Templeton,  
 Martin R. Delaney,  
 George Gardner,  
 Robert L. Hawkins,  
 John Curtis,  
 John Mitchell, Sr.,  
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 Isaiah Watson,  
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 Samuel Robinson,  
 Owen A. Barrett,  
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 Benjamin Richards,  
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 Young Reed,  
 John Peck, of A.,  
 Amos Siscoe,  
 Samuel Venable,  
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 Henry Jackson,  
 Vincent A. Johnson,  
 William Wilder,  
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 Nathaniel Dixon,  
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 Joseph H. Mahorney,  
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 Washington Hunter,  
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 Thomas Knox,  
 John Williams,  
 Daniel Carney,  
 Nathan Moore,

Lewis M'Alfrey,  
 Henry M. Collins,  
 Charles Dockens,  
 Larkin Graves,  
 Charles Beno,  
 Obadiah Maloney,  
 Charles Wedley,  
 Daniel Johnson,  
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 Thomas S. Robinson,  
 Elias Johnson,  
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 Jeremiah Fisher,  
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 James Hardin,  
 Richard Chidester,  
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